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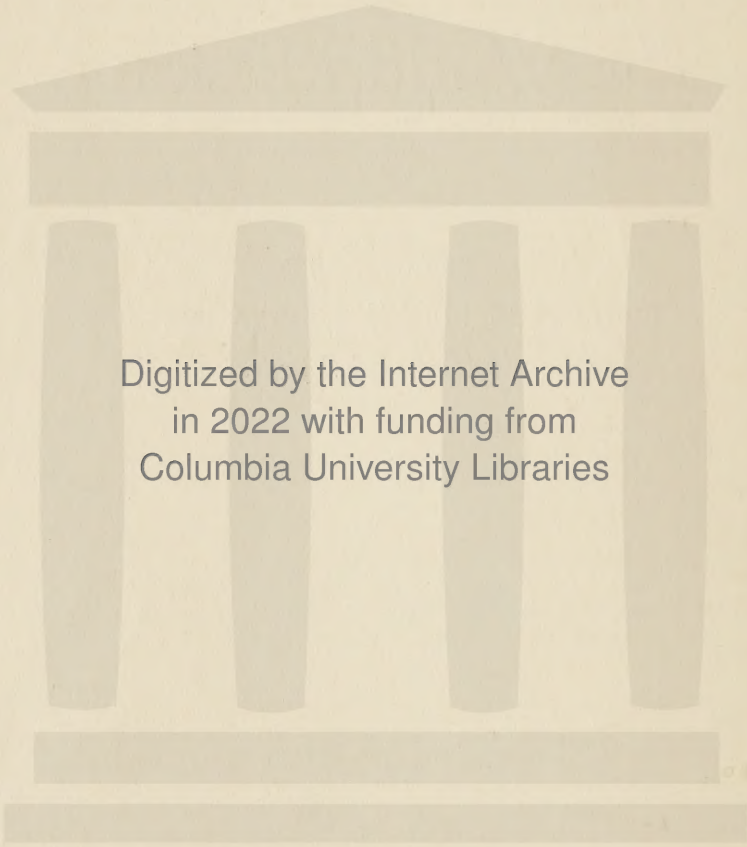
The Christian Message
and
The World Mission

A Statement Adopted by
The International Missionary Council
Jerusalem, March 24-April 8, 1928

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
419 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY
1928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FOREWORD

The following statement is a reprint of the first chapter of The World Mission of Christianity, *a pamphlet which contains the fifteen official statements adopted by the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Jerusalem, 1928.*

The Jerusalem Meeting, although strictly limited in size in order to facilitate intimate fellowship, mutual understanding, sharing of insight and experience, and corporate thinking, embraced a company of acknowledged leaders of the Christian forces of some fifty countries. In this gathering representatives of the younger churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America collaborated in approximately equal numbers with those of the older churches of Europe, North America, and Australasia.

The results of the intensive, prayerful, united deliberation of this truly creative gathering are set forth in the form of findings and proposals which are submitted, not only to the churches and their various boards and other auxiliary agencies, but also to all who have at heart the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the world. They constitute a remarkable presentation of the united experience, thought, and vision of workers in all of the principal fields and phases of the vast and complex enterprise of world-wide missions. Those who are most familiar with the stupendous changes which have taken place in the world within the past two decades, as well as with the significant developments within the Christian movement itself, will regard these findings as most discerning, timely, and prophetic.

The findings, together with the revised preliminary papers that were published in preparation for the Council Meeting and an interpretative summary of the discussions in the plenary sessions of the Council and in its sectional meetings are now available in the complete eight-volume report of the Jerusalem Meeting. These volumes merit attentive reading, conclusive thinking, and courageous action.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

Go and Make Disciples of All Nations

THROUGHOUT the world there is a sense of insecurity and instability. Ancient religions are undergoing modification, and in some regions dissolution, as scientific and commercial development alter the current of men's thought. Institutions regarded with age-long veneration are discarded or called in question; well-established standards of moral conduct are brought under criticism; and countries called Christian feel the stress as truly as the peoples of Asia and Africa. On all sides doubt is expressed whether there is any absolute truth or goodness. A new relativism struggles to enthrone itself in human thought.

Along with this is found the existence of world-wide suffering and pain, which expresses itself partly in a despair of all higher values, partly in a tragically earnest quest of a new basis for life and thought, in the birthpangs of rising nationalism, in the ever-keener consciousness of race and class oppression.

Amid widespread indifference and immersion in material concerns we also find everywhere, now in noble forms and now in license or extravagance, a great yearning, especially among the youth of the world, for the full and untrammeled expression of personality, for spiritual leadership and authority, for reality in religion, for social justice, for human brotherhood, for international peace.

In this world, bewildered and groping for its way, Jesus Christ has drawn to Himself the attention and admiration of mankind as never before. He stands before men as plainly greater than Western civilization, greater than the Christianity that the world has come to know. Many who have not hitherto been won to His Church yet find in Him their hero and their ideal. Within His Church there is a widespread desire for unity centered in His Person.

Our Message

Against this background and in relation to it, we have to proclaim our message.

Our message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man through Him may become. In Him we come face to face with the ultimate reality of the universe; He makes known to us God as our Father, perfect and infinite in love and in righteousness; for in Him we find

God incarnate, the final, yet ever-unfolding, revelation of the God in whom we live and move and have our being.

We hold that through all that happens, in light and in darkness, God is working, ruling and overruling. Jesus Christ, in His life and through His death and resurrection, has disclosed to us the Father, the Supreme Reality, as almighty Love, reconciling the world to Himself by the Cross, suffering with men in their struggle against sin and evil, bearing with them and for them the burden of sin, forgiving them as they, with forgiveness in their own hearts, turn to Him in repentance and faith, and creating humanity anew for an ever-growing, ever-enlarging, everlasting life.

The vision of God in Christ brings and deepens the sense of sin and guilt. We are not worthy of His love; we have by our own fault opposed His holy will. Yet that same vision which brings the sense of guilt brings also the assurance of pardon, if only we yield ourselves in faith to the spirit of Christ so that His redeeming love may avail to reconcile us to God.

We reaffirm that God, as Jesus Christ has revealed Him, requires all His children, in all circumstances, at all times, and in all human relationships, to live in love and righteousness for His glory. By the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit God offers His own power to men that they may be fellow workers with Him, and urges them on to a life of adventure and self-sacrifice in preparation for the coming of His Kingdom in its fulness.

We will not ourselves offer any further formulation of the Christian message, for we remember that as lately as in August, 1927, the World Conference on Faith and Order met at Lausanne, and that a statement on this subject was issued from that Conference after it had been received with full acceptance. We are glad to make this our own.

"The message of the Church to the world is and must always remain the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The Gospel is the joyful message of redemption both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ.

"The world was prepared for the coming of Christ through the activities of God's Holy Spirit in all humanity, but especially in His revelation as given in the Old Testament; and in the fulness of time the eternal Word of God became incarnate and was made man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, full of grace and truth.

"Through His life and teaching, His call to repentance, His proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of judgment, His suffering and death, His resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and by the mission of the Holy Spirit, He has brought to us forgiveness of sins, and has revealed the fulness of the living God and His boundless love

toward us. By the appeal of that love, shown in its completeness on the Cross, He summons us to the new life of faith, self-sacrifice, and devotion to His service and the service of men.

"Jesus Christ, as the crucified and the living One, as Saviour and Lord, is also the center of the world-wide Gospel of the Apostles and the Church. Because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world. It is more than a philosophical theory; more than a theological system; more than a program for material betterment. The Gospel is rather the gift of a new world from God to this old world of sin and death; still more, it is the victory over sin and death, the revelation of eternal life in Him who has knit together the whole family in heaven and on earth in the communion of saints, united in the fellowship of service, of prayer, and of praise.

"The Gospel is the prophetic call to sinful man to turn to God, the joyful tidings of justification and of sanctification to those who believe in Christ. It is the comfort of those who suffer; to those who are bound it is the assurance of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Gospel brings peace and joy to the heart, and produces in men self-denial, readiness for brotherly service, and compassionate love. It offers the supreme goal for the aspirations of youth, strength to the toiler, rest to the weary, and the crown of life to the martyr.

"The Gospel is the sure source of power for social regeneration. It proclaims the only way by which humanity can escape from those class- and race-hatreds which devastate society at present into the enjoyment of national well-being and international friendship and peace. It is also a gracious invitation to the non-Christian world, East and West, to enter into the joy of the living Lord.

"Sympathizing with the anguish of our generation, with its longing for intellectual sincerity, social justice, and spiritual inspiration, the Church in the eternal Gospel meets the needs and fulfils the God-given aspirations of the modern world. Consequently, as in the past so also in the present, the Gospel is the only way of salvation. Thus, through His Church, the living Christ still says to men, 'Come unto me! . . . He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

The Missionary Motive

If such is our message, the motive for its delivery should be plain. The Gospel is the answer to the world's greatest need. It is not our discovery or achievement; it rests on what we recognize as an act of God. It is first and foremost "Good News." It announces glorious Truth. Its very nature

forbids us to say that it may be the right belief for some but not for others. Either it is true for all, or it is not true at all.

But questions concerning the missionary motive have been widely raised, and such a change in the habits of men's thoughts as the last generation has witnessed must call for a re-examination of these questions.

Accordingly we would lay bare the motives that impel us to the missionary enterprise. We recognize that the health of our movement and of our souls demands a self-criticism that is relentless and exacting.

In searching for the motives that impel us we find ourselves eliminating decisively and at once certain motives that may seem, in the minds of some, to have become mixed up with purer motives in the history of the movement. We repudiate any attempt on the part of trade or of governments, openly or covertly, to use the missionary cause for ulterior purposes. Our Gospel by its very nature and by its declaration of the sacredness of human personality stands against all exploitation of man by man, so that we cannot tolerate any desire, conscious or unconscious, to use this movement for purposes of fastening a bondage, economic, political, or social, on any people.

Going deeper, on our part we would repudiate any symptoms of a religious imperialism that would desire to impose beliefs and practices on others in order to manage their souls in their supposed interests. We obey a God who respects our wills and we desire to respect those of others.

Nor have we the desire to bind up our Gospel with fixed ecclesiastical forms which derive their meaning from the experience of the Western Church. Rather the aim should be to place at the disposal of the younger churches of all lands our collective and historic experience. We believe that much of that heritage has come out of reality and will be worth sharing. But we ardently desire that the younger churches should express the Gospel through their own genius and through forms suitable to their racial heritage. There must be no desire to lord it over the personal or collective faith of others.

Our true and compelling motive lies in the very nature of the God to whom we have given our hearts. Since He is love, His very nature is to share. Christ is the expression in time of the eternal self-giving of the Father. Coming into fellowship with Christ we find in ourselves an overmastering impulse to share Him with others. We are constrained by the love of Christ and by obedience to His last command. He Himself said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and our experience corroborates it. He has become life to us. We would share that life.

We are assured that Christ comes with an offer of life to man and to

societies and to nations. We believe that in Him the shackles of moral evil and guilt are broken from human personality and that men are made free, and that such personal freedom lies at the basis of the freeing of society from cramping custom and blighting social practices and political bondage, so that in Christ men and societies and nations may stand up free and complete.

We find in Christ, and especially in His cross and resurrection, an inexhaustible source of power that makes us hope when there is no hope. We believe that through it men and societies and nations that have lost their moral nerve to live will be quickened into life.

We have a pattern in our minds as to what form that life should take. We believe in a Christlike world. We know nothing better; we can be content with nothing less. We do not go to the nations called non-Christian, because they are the worst of the world and they alone are in need—we go because they are a part of the world and share with us in the same human need—the need of redemption from ourselves and from sin, the need to have life complete and abundant and to be remade after this pattern of Christlikeness. We desire a world in which Christ will not be crucified but where His Spirit shall reign.

We believe that men are made for Christ and cannot really live apart from Him. Our fathers were impressed with the horror that men should die without Christ—we share that horror; we are impressed also with the horror that men should live without Christ.

Herein lies the Christian motive; it is simple. We cannot live without Christ and we cannot bear to think of men living without Him. We cannot be content to live in a world that is un-Christlike. We cannot be idle while the yearning of His heart for His brethren is unsatisfied.

Since Christ is the motive, the end of Christian missions fits in with that motive. Its end is nothing less than the production of Christlike character in individuals and societies and nations through faith in and fellowship with Christ the living Saviour, and through corporate sharing of life in a divine society.

Christ is our motive and Christ is our end. We must give nothing less, and we can give nothing more.

The Spirit of Our Endeavor

Our approach to our task must be made in humility and penitence and love: in humility, because it is not our own message which we bring, but God's, and if in our delivery of it self-assertion finds any place we shall spoil that message and hinder its acceptance; in penitence because our fathers and we ourselves have been so blind to many of the implications of our faith; in

love, because our message is the Gospel of the Love of God, and only by love in our own hearts for those to whom we speak can we make known its power or its true nature.

Especially do we confess the sluggishness of the older churches to realize and discharge their responsibility to carry the Gospel to all the world; and all alike we confess our neglect to bring the ordering of men's lives into conformity with the spirit of Christ. The Church has not firmly and effectively set its face against race-hatred, race-envy, race-contempt, or against social envy and contempt and class-bitterness, or against racial, national, and social pride, or against the lust for wealth and exploitation of the poor or weak. We believe that the Gospel "proclaims the only way by which humanity can escape from class- and race-hatred." But we are forced to recognize that such a claim requires to be made good and that the record of Christendom hitherto is not sufficient to sustain it. Nor has it sufficiently sought out the good and noble elements in the non-Christian beliefs, that it might learn that deeper personal fellowship with adherents of those beliefs wherein they may be more powerfully drawn to the living Christ. We know that, even apart from conscious knowledge of Him, when men are true to the best light they have, they are able to effect some real deliverance from many of the evils that afflict the world; and this should prompt us the more to help them to find the fulness of light and power in Christ.

But while we record these failures we are also bound to record with thankfulness the achievements of the Christian Church in this field. The difference between the Europe known to St. Paul and the Europe known to Dante, to Luther, to Wesley is plain for all to see. From every quarter of the globe comes testimony to the liberation effected by Christ for women. Since the vast changes made by the development of industrialism have come to be appreciated, every country has had its Christian social movements and the Universal Conference on Life and Work, held at Stockholm in 1925, revealed how widespread and influential these have become. Truly our efforts have not been commensurate with the needs of the world or with the claim of Christ; but in what has been accomplished and attempted we have already great encouragement for the days to come. In particular there is a growing sensitiveness of conscience with regard to war and the conditions that may lead up to it. For all these indications of the growing power of the spirit of Christ among Christians we thank God. And we call on all Christian people to be ready for pioneering thought and action in the name of Christ. Too often the Church has adopted new truth, or new goals for enterprise, only when the danger attached to them is over. There is a risk of rashness; but there is also possible an excessive caution by which,

because His Church hangs back, the glory of new truth or enterprise which rightly belongs to Christ is in men's thoughts denied to Him.

The Call to the World

Filled with conviction that Jesus Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world, and conscious of a desperate need in ourselves and in all the world for what He only can supply, we call upon our fellow Christians and all our fellow men to turn again to Him for pardon and for power.

1. To all the Churches of Christ we call: that they stand firmly upon the rock of Christian conviction and whole-heartedly accept its missionary obligations; that they go forward in full loyalty to Christ to discover and to express, in the power and freedom of the Holy Spirit, the treasures in His unsearchable riches which it is the privilege and duty of each to win for the Universal Church; that they strive to deliver the name of Christ and of Christianity from complicity in any evil or injustice.

Those who proclaim Christ's message must give evidence for it in their own lives and in the social institutions which they uphold. It is by living Christ among men that we may most effectively lift Him up before them. The spirit that returns love for hate, and overcomes evil with good, must be evidently present in those who would be witnesses for Christ. They are also bound to exert all their influence to secure that the social, international, and inter-racial relationships in the midst of which their work is done, are subordinate to and expressive of His spirit. Especially must it be a serious obstacle to missionary effort if a non-Christian country feels that the relation of the so-called Christian countries to itself is morally unsound or is alien from the principles of Christ, and the Church must be ready for labor and sacrifice to remove whatever is justly so condemned.

The task before us is beyond our powers. It can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit, whose power we receive in its completeness only in the fellowship of Christ's disciples. We call all followers of Christ to take their full share as members of His Body, which is the Church; no discontent with its organization or tradition or failings should be allowed to keep us outside its fold; the isolated Christian is impoverished in his spiritual life and impotent in his activities; our strength, both inward and outward, is in the living fellowship. But in these hurried and feverish days there is also more need than ever for the deepening of our spiritual life through periodical detachment from the world and its need in lonely communion with God. We desire also to call for a greater volume of intercessory prayer. The whole Church should be earnest and instant in prayer, each part for every other, and all together for the Church's unity and for the hallowing of God's Name throughout the world.

Further, we call on Christians in all lands who are trained in science, art, or philosophy to devote their talents to the working out of that Christian view of life and the world which we sorely need to secure us against instability, bewilderment, and extravagance.

Lastly, we urge that every possible step be taken to make real the fellowship of the Gospel. The churches of the West send missions and missions-of-help to the churches of Africa and Asia. We believe that the time is come when all would gain if the younger churches were invited to send missions-of-help to the churches of Europe and America, that they may minister of their treasure to the spiritual life of those to whom they come.

2. To non-Christians also we make our call. We rejoice to think that just because in Jesus Christ the light that lighteneth every man shone forth in its full splendor, we find rays of that same light where He is unknown or even is rejected. We welcome every noble quality in non-Christian persons or systems as further proof that the Father, who sent His Son into the world, has nowhere left Himself without witness.

Thus, merely to give illustration, and making no attempt to estimate the spiritual value of other religions to their adherents, we recognize as part of the one Truth that sense of the Majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship, which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for the way of escape, which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with Ultimate Reality conceived as spiritual, which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in a moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct, which are inculcated by Confucianism; the disinterested pursuit of truth and of human welfare which are often found in those who stand for secular civilization but do not accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Especially we make our call to the Jewish people, whose Scriptures have become our own, and "of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh," that with open heart they turn to that Lord in whom is fulfilled the hope of their nation, its prophetic message, and its zeal for holiness. And we call upon our fellow Christians in all lands to show to Jews that loving-kindness that has too seldom been shown towards them.

We call on the followers of non-Christian religions to join with us in the study of Jesus Christ as He stands before us in the Scriptures, His place in the life of the world, and His power to satisfy the human heart; to hold fast to faith in the unseen and eternal in face of the growing materialism of the world; to coöperate with us against all the evils of secularism; to respect freedom of conscience so that men may confess Christ without separation from home and friends; and to discern that all the good of which men have conceived is fulfilled and secured in Christ.

Christianity is not a Western religion, nor is it yet effectively accepted by the Western world as a whole. Christ belongs to the peoples of Africa and Asia as much as to the European or American. We call all men to equal fellowship in Him. But to come to Him is always self-surrender. We must not come in the pride of national heritage or religious tradition; he who would enter the Kingdom of God must become as a little child, though in that Kingdom are all the treasures of man's aspirations, consecrated and harmonized. Just because Christ is the self-disclosure of the One God, all human aspirations are towards Him, and yet of no human tradition is He merely the continuation. He is the desire of all nations; but He is always more, and other, than they had desired before they learnt of Him.

But we would insist that when the Gospel of the Love of God comes home with power to the human heart, it speaks to each man, not as Moslem or as Buddhist, or as an adherent of any system, but just as man. And while we rightly study other religions in order to approach men wisely, yet at the last we speak as men to men, inviting them to share with us the pardon and the life that we have found in Christ.

3. To all who inherit the benefits of secular civilization and contribute to its advancement we make our call. We claim for Christ the labors of scientists and artists. We recognize their service to His cause in dispersing the darkness of ignorance, superstition, and vulgarity. We appreciate also the noble elements that are found in nationalist movements and in patriotism, the loyalty, the self-devotion, the idealism, which love of country can inspire. But even these may lead to strife and bitterness and narrowness of outlook if they are not dedicated to Christ; in His universal Kingdom of Love all nations by right are provinces, and fulfil their own true destiny only in His service. When patriotism and science are not consecrated they are often debased into self-assertion, exploitation, and the service of greed. Indeed, throughout all nations the great peril of our time arises from that immense development of man's power over the resources of nature which has been the great characteristic of our epoch. This power gives opportunity for wealth of interest, and, through facilities of communication, for freedom of intercourse such as has never been known. But it has outgrown our spiritual and moral control.

Amid the clashes of industrial strife the Gospel summons men to work together as brothers in providing for the human family the economic basis of the good life. In the presence of social antipathies and exclusiveness the Gospel insists that we are members of one family, and that our Father desires for each a full and equal opportunity to attain to His own complete development, and to make his special contribution to the richness

of the family life. Confronted by international relations that constantly flout Christ's law of love, there is laid on all who bear His name the solemn obligation to labor unceasingly for a new world order in which justice shall be secured for all peoples, and every occasion for war or threat of war be removed.

Such changes can be brought about only through an unreserved acceptance of Christ's way of love, and by the courageous and sacrificial living that it demands. Still ringing in our ears is the call, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds."

Conclusion

In our conference together we have seen more clearly the fulness and sufficiency of the Gospel and our own need of the salvation of Christ. The enlarging thoughts of the generation find the Gospel and the Saviour ever richer and greater than men had known.

This deepened assurance of the adequacy and universality of the Gospel, however, is not enough. More effective ways must be found for its proclamation, not to systems of opinion only, but to human beings, to men and women for whom Christ died. The most thorough and convincing intellectual statement of Christianity is necessary, but such statements cannot suffice. The Gospel must be expressed also in simplicity and love, and offered to men's hearts and minds by word and deed and life, by righteousness and loving-kindness, by justice, sympathy, and compassion, by ministry to human needs and the deep want of the world.

As together, Christians of all lands, we have surveyed the world and the needs of men, we are convinced of the urgent necessity for a great increase in the Christian forces in all countries, and for a still fuller measure of coöperation between the churches of all nations in more speedily laying the claim of Christ upon all the unoccupied areas of the world and of human life.

We are persuaded that we and all Christian people must seek a more heroic practice of the Gospel. It cannot be that our present complacency and moderation are a faithful expression of the mind of Christ, and of the meaning of His cross and resurrection in the midst of the wrong and want and sin of our modern world. As we contemplate the work with which Christ has charged His Church, we who are met here on the Mount of Olives, in sight of Calvary, would take up for ourselves and summon those from whom we come and to whom we return to take up with us the Cross of Christ, and all that for which it stands, and to go forth into the world to live in the fellowship of His sufferings and by the power of His resurrection, in hope and expectation of His glorious Kingdom.

REPORTS OF THE JERUSALEM MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL

I. The World Mission of Christianity.

The fifteen statements and recommendations of the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council, together with a foreword by Dr. John R. Mott, Chairman, and a list of the council members. Price, 25 cents.

II. Minutes of the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council held at Jerusalem, March 24 to April 8, 1928.

A record of the daily proceedings of the Council Meeting. Price, 25 cents.

III. Roads to the City of God: A World Outlook from Jerusalem, by Mr. Basil Mathews, with a foreword by Dr. John R. Mott, Chairman.

An account and interpretation of the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem, 1928. Published in North America by Doubleday Doran & Co. and by the Missionary Education Movement, and in England by the Edinburgh House Press and obtainable from all missionary societies and booksellers. Price: Paper cover, 50 cents; cloth cover, $1.00.

IV. The Complete Report of the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council held on the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem, March 24 to April 8, 1928.

This report consists of the eight volumes named below. Each volume contains the revised preliminary papers, an interpretative summary of the Council discussions and of the sectional meetings, the statements adopted by the Council, and in some cases certain additional papers.

Volume 1. The Christian Life and Message in relation to Non-Christian systems, —Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam, and Secular Civilization.
Volume 2. Religious Education.
Volume 3. The Relation between the Younger and the Older Churches.
Volume 4. The Christian Mission in the Light of Race Conflict.
Volume 5. The Christian Mission in relation to Industrial Problems.
Volume 6. The Christian Mission in relation to Rural Problems.
Volume 7. International Missionary Coöperation.
Volume 8. Addresses on General Subjects.

Price of the complete set of eight volumes, $7.00 net.

V. Preliminary Papers. There are still available a limited number of the papers on the subjects listed above which were published in preparation for the Meeting in Jerusalem, which will be sold at a specially reduced price of 20 cents a copy. "Religious Values in Confucianism," by D. Willard Lyon which has been reprinted only in part will be sold for 25 cents a copy. "The Unfinished Evangelistic Task" by Charles H. Fahs, which is not being reprinted will be sold for 50 cents a copy.

Orders for the above publications, which must be accompanied by payment in full, may be sent to the

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